

Hearts Set on Pilgrimage, Part 1

I'm thankful we're in a place like it speaks about in Ps 84, if we look at it right. In verses 2-3 it says, *"My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Sovereign [that's where we are right now]; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may have her young."* If He takes care of even the sparrow, how much more will He take care of us who are in His temple? Verse 4-5 – *"Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage"* How ridiculous it would be if we served our Father in our own strength. How silly it is to think we could do it and please Him. *"If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides,"* (1 Pet 4:11). Is your heart set on pilgrimage? Do you know the hardships of pilgrimage like the Pilgrims did? Half of them died the first year to establish this nation, where people have freedom of religion, not under a monarchy – the United States of America. And we are on a pilgrimage, to help cause the establishment of the Twelve Tribes. Ps 84:6 – *"As they pass through the valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs."* If we use the strength He supplies we will go from strength to strength until we appear before our Father in Zion. The "valley of Baca" was written for us, not for king David (he suffered alone), but for a people. Israel went through suffering, but they didn't endure the testing and they were destroyed in the wilderness. **Baca** is the difficulties we face in a pilgrimage. If we endure when we go through the dark valley of Baca, then we turn it into something else — pools (springs) of water – **if** we endure the suffering the enemy puts on us. When we are faced with obstacles in our way, we have to suffer hardship so we can turn it into springs, something beautiful. Verse 11 – *"For the Sovereign God is a sun and shield; the Sovereign bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless."* The sun (the word is *shemish*) will be illuminating everything. The sun, the moon and the stars all worship the Creator. All of creation (especially human beings) should worship Him because they were created by Him.

Ps 136:7-9 – It says the sun, moon and stars rule – they are doing what they were created to do, and we rule when we are doing what we were created to do. We were created to serve; that's ruling and worshipping. I'm thankful we can do what we were created to do. Even if a person never heard the gospel, he can do what's in his heart, unwittingly serving by his conscience, the vice-regent of God. Now, we serve by the Holy Spirit and someday we'll be a light to the nations (an illumination).

Let's make "Baca" a spring of water. The springs are there; we just haven't discovered it yet. That's Baca. **Baruch** – In Ps 84 it's not talking about taking a trip, but it's talking about a pilgrimage, with hardships. That's our calling – the upward call. There are roadblocks along the way, but we are called to keep on going and not stop under any circumstances. What if the Pilgrims had quit? They could have when they landed and were faced by Indians. They could have gone back and saved their families. Then there would not have been a place for us. They didn't "circumvent" their circumstances. In verse 6 it says, *"passing through the valley of Baca,"* – it says, *"passing through"* which suggests there might have been a high or low road around it. But only by "passing through" can you make it a "spring." Those are the ones who go through, who say, **"Yes!"** and keep on going through the suffering and life gushes forth in little springs. Then the valley of suffering becomes a river.

That's where Paul got what he said in Acts 14:21 – *"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."*

Bakhirah – When I think about a pilgrimage, I think about a way that no one has ever gone before. We are groping to understand His ways. Many have tried it, but they didn't get to the end of the journey. I'm thankful that what I hear gives me the courage to go on and we can learn to go the way our Father wants us to go.

If we go through and not curse God, making it a spring of joy, we have passed out of death and into life.

Haninah – It makes me think about Heb 11 and how we are doing what the prophets of old were doing. We have such examples in the Body of people who go *through* the valley. When we go through

things that are hard for us and we make it a spring, it points to our Master – the glory goes to Him. We aren't perfect right now, but someday we will be and our Master will come for us, His bride.

Zahav – When I hear about the word “pilgrimage” I think about some priests I've heard about who walk hundreds of miles on their knees just by sheer will power. I was never impressed with their God. But in the Body we can go through struggles and we can receive the grace to overcome and it brings glory to our Father.

Those priests who do penance by walking on their knees don't accomplish one thing! But the things we go through are accomplishing something. Even the Pilgrims who came to this country accomplished something – they helped establish this nation. And what we are accomplishing is establishing our Father's purpose.

Ps 84:10 – *Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere,*” –somewhere else, having a good time. A day in His courts is better than a thousand somewhere else in the world.